TIPS FROM THE DEAN:
ATTENDANCE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

This week’s “Tips from the Dean” may seem obvious, but it’s worth repeating—there is no substitute for going to class. Attendance can be the key to success!

1) Go to class every day. Put away your phone and your computer. Engage, ask questions, and take handwritten notes.

2) Don’t skip class because you didn’t do the work and are embarrassed you may be called out. If the class relies on discussion, be honest with the t.a. or professor that you might not be able to participate fully—they will notice anyway! Skipping the class will just put you more behind, and less likely to participate the next time. It becomes a vicious cycle.

3) Don’t skip class because you didn’t do the work due in class.

4) Don’t skip class to do work that’s due in another class.

5) Don’t skip classes that meet every day. These are usually language classes, where attendance is mandatory, and the professor often covers a lot of material in one class. Regular attendance is the key to success here!

6) Don’t skip classes that meet once a week. (These classes only meet 13 times, at the most. Missing one class means you are missing out on a large part of the semester.)

7) Video lectures can be great in a pinch, but they are no substitute for the physical presence of the professor. Don’t rely on them. (Plus, you didn’t come to Yale to watch videos of your professors, did you?)

8) If you are sick and can’t go to class, remember that Dean’s Excuses cannot be issued for absences. Get in touch with the professor right away, explain why you will be missing class, and offer to send medical documentation if you have it.

9) If something else is interfering with your ability to go to class regularly, please reach out to me and your professors to see how we can help.

All of this advice is geared around the fact that there is no substitute for going to class, listening to a lecture yourself, actively participating in discussion, and asking questions. A friend or another student might be willing to share notes with you, but it’s not the same as synthesizing what you learn in class in your own words.

There’s also no substitute for the network you will build by going to class. Professors and t.a.s will remember if you are there, and you’ll build relationships with other students by going to class. This will help you form study groups and feel comfortable reaching out for help if you need it down the line.

Students often feel guilty about missing a class or not being prepared for class, and it can start a dangerous cycle of skipping classes that undermines your academic success. Please come talk to me if this is happening to you!